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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton. "Soul of An Advocate" (2016). http://wayback.archive-it.org/4727/20160920162012/https://www.udayton.edu/news/articles/2016/05/camilo_perez_bustillo_human_rights_center_executive_director.php

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NEWS

Wednesday May 18, 2016

Soul of An Advocate

Camilo Pérez-Bustillo, a former advisor to the United Nations and coordinator of a project on human rights along the U.S.-Mexico border, will be the first executive director of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center.

Pérez-Bustillo comes to the University of Dayton from New Mexico State University where he was a visiting professor in the departments of government and criminal justice and coordinator of the Border Human Rights Documentation Project.

"As an international human rights lawyer, Camilo Pérez-Bustillo brings significant global experience in human rights research and advocacy, particularly in Latin America, and has articulated a compelling vision for the Human Rights Center," said Jason Pierce, dean of the University of Dayton College of Arts and Sciences. "I'm confident our faculty, students, external partners and key stakeholders will immediately see an engaging, collaborative leader capable of advancing the reputation and influence of the University of Dayton in the human rights movement."

Pérez-Bustillo also will hold the position of research professor of human rights and law at the University.

"I'm thrilled Camilo is coming to the Human Rights Center," said Mark Ensalcado, the center's director of research and founder of the University's human rights studies program. "He has the mind of an academic and the soul of an advocate. He is just what we are looking for in an executive director."

Pérez-Bustillo, who served as an advisor on poverty and human rights to the United Nations Human Rights Council, said the University of Dayton Human Rights Center is well-positioned to make contributions to human rights research, scholarship and advocacy globally. He plans to ground the center's work in the contributions of social movements in the global south — Latin America, Africa and Asia — and among marginalized communities across the U.S.

"I will do everything possible to position the Human Rights Center strategically among its peers throughout the U.S. and the world, and in particular to forge close ties between its efforts and that of colleagues in national and international networks who share our vision," Pérez-Bustillo said.

Pérez-Bustillo hopes to further enrich the work of the human rights studies program, build on successful Human Rights Center initiatives in Malawi and Brazil, and forge close ties with the University of Dayton School of Law.

Natalie Hudson, director the University of Dayton human rights studies program who headed the search committee, said Pérez-Bustillo has the administrative capabilities, fundraising experience, intellectual heft and passion for human rights to provide clear leadership and a cohesive vision for leading the center.

"He is committed to human rights at home and abroad and has a solid understanding of how the University's Catholic and Marianist identity informs the mission of the Human Rights Center — to work at the frontiers of research and advocacy," Hudson said.

Pérez-Bustillo, the author of several books, chapters and articles regarding human rights issues, graduated with a law degree from Northeastern University in Boston. He was the first Latino appointed Haywood Burns Chair in Civil Rights at the City University of New York School of Law. He also is a fellow of the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, a project of the International Social Sciences Council based at the University of Bergen in Norway. Pérez-Bustillo's experience also includes 20 years in Mexico as a human rights scholar and advocate, plus another decade as a civil rights lawyer specializing in the educational rights of immigrant children and youth.

His book, *Human Rights, Hegemony and Utopia in Latin America: Poverty, Forced Migration and Resistance in Mexico and Colombia*, written with human rights advocate and documentary photographer Karla Hernández Mares, is due out June 16.

The University of Dayton is a pioneer in human rights education. It started the country's first undergraduate human rights program in 1998 and offered one of the nation's first bachelor's degrees in human rights studies in 2008.

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